[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00613-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws. This proposed AD would require determining whether the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment since the last inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment, and replacement of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if necessary, as specified in a European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD, which will be incorporated by reference. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

• Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to https://www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

• Fax: 202-493-2251.

• Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

• Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this IBR material on the EASA website at https://ad.easa.europa.eu. You may view this IBR material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110. It is also available in the AD docket on the Internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington DC 20024; phone: 202-267-9167; email: hal.jensen@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include "Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00613-R" at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to https://www.regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this proposal.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as "PROPIN." The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington DC 20024; phone: 202-267-9167; email: hal.jensen@faa.gov. Any

commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Discussion

The EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0032, dated February 17, 2017; corrected February 20, 2017 (EASA AD 2017-0032) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 B, AS 350 BA, AS 350 BB, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, AS 350 B3, and AS 350 D helicopters; AS 355 E, AS 355 F, AS 355 F1, AS 355 F2, AS 355 N, and AS 355 NP helicopters; and EC 130 B4 and EC 130 T2 helicopters. Model AS 350 BB helicopters are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this proposed AD therefore does not include those helicopters in the applicability. This AD also applies to Airbus Helicopter Model AS 350C helicopters because these helicopters have a similar design and are included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet.

This proposed AD was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws on a Model EC130B4 helicopter during a scheduled maintenance inspection. The FAA is proposing this AD to address failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, which could lead to disconnection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2017-0032 describes procedures for determining whether the helicopter has been operated in a severe environment since the last inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws for corrosion and damage (damage includes cracks, dents, and bolt

distortion) if the helicopter was operated in a severe environment, and replacement of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws if necessary. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, the FAA has been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is proposing this AD because the FAA evaluated all the relevant information and determined the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2017-0032, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD and except as discussed under "Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI."

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA initially worked with Airbus and EASA to develop a process to use certain EASA ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has since coordinated with other manufacturers and civil aviation authorities (CAAs) to use this process. As a result, EASA AD 2017-0032 will be incorporated by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2017-0032 in its entirety, through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of

this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in the EASA AD does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to "all required actions and compliance times," compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled "Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)" in the EASA AD. Service information specified in EASA AD 2017-0032 that is required for compliance with EASA AD 2017-0032 will be available on the Internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131 after the FAA final rule is published.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI

EASA AD 2017-0032 does not apply to Airbus Helicopter Model AS350C helicopters, which are included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet. However, this proposed AD would apply to Airbus Helicopter Model AS350C helicopters because those helicopters have a similar design to the helicopters identified in EASA AD 2017-0032.

Where the service information specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to contact Airbus Helicopters if damage or corrosion exceeds existing criteria, this proposed AD would require replacing the affected screws using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this proposed AD affects 1,220 helicopters of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs for required determination of helicopter operation in a severe environment

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
1 work-hours X $85 per hour = $85	$0	$85	$103,700

The FAA estimates that it would take about 1 hour per product to comply with the proposed reporting requirement in this proposed AD. The average labor rate is $85 per hour. Based on these figures, the FAA estimates the cost of reporting the inspection results on U.S. operators to be $103,700, or $85 per product.

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary on-condition actions that would be required based on the results of any required actions. If a helicopter is determined to have been operated in a severe environment, an inspection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws will be required. If there is corrosion or damage to any of the screws, replacement of the affected screws will be required. The FAA has no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need these on-condition actions:

Estimated costs of on-condition actions

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
4 work-hours X $85 per hour = $340	$106	$446

Paperwork Reduction Act

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this proposed AD is 2120-0056. The paperwork cost associated with this proposed AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this proposed AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters: Docket No. FAA-2020-1131; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00613-R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected Airworthiness Directives (ADs)

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters, certificated in any category, as identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this AD.

(1) Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, and AS350D helicopters.

(2) Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters.

(3) Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6200, Main Rotor System.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws. The FAA is issuing this AD to address failed main rotor hub-to-mast attachment screws, which could lead to disconnection of the main rotor hub-to-mast attachment, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2017-0032, dated February 17, 2017; corrected February 20, 2017 (EASA AD 2017-0032).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2017-0032

(1) Where EASA AD 2017-0032 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) The "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2017-0032 does not apply to this AD.

(3) Paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to report inspection results to Airbus Helicopters within a certain compliance time. For this AD, report inspection results at the applicable time specified in paragraph (h)(3)(i) or (ii) of this AD.

(i) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the inspection.

(ii) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(4) Where EASA AD 2017-0032 refers to flight hours (FH), this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(5) Where the service information specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to contact Airbus Helicopters if damage or corrosion exceeds existing criteria, for this AD, replace the affected screws using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically refer to this AD.

(6) Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2017-0032 specifies to discard certain parts, this AD does not include that requirement.

(i) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):

The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(j) Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering

and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory as required by this AD. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

(k) Related Information

(1) For EASA AD 2017-0032, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at https://ad.easa.europa.eu. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-1131.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington DC 20024; phone: 202-267-9167; email: hal.jensen@faa.gov.

Issued on December 9, 2020.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2020-27460 Filed: 12/14/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 12/15/2020]